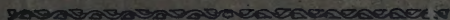


ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS



SELECTIONS
FROM THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY W. H. VENABLE, LL.D
OF THE WALNUT HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, CINCINNATI



AMERICAN · BOOK · COMPANY
NEW YORK · CINCINNATI · CHICAGO

Henry F. Koberstein.

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Am. Torriworth

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WORDSWORTH

W. P. 9

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INTRODUCTION.

I. LIFE AND GENIUS OF WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, a country village on the Derwent, in Cumberland County, England. He was the second child in a family of five, having three brothers and one sister. His parents belonged to the ranks of the landed gentry of North England, and were energetic people of no extraordinary traits. The father was a lawyer.

William inherited a vigorous body and a strong, independent mind. He grew up a moody lad, rather intractable, causing his mother some uneasy apprehensions for his future. The boy was surcharged with vital force, was fond of active sports, such as rowing and skating, and, though he liked books, he enjoyed still more keenly the pictured volume of visible nature. The influence which did most to develop his intellect and form his character was found, not in society, but in solitude. His school was out of doors; his books were the "running brooks;"

"His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars!"

Even in early youth Wordsworth was dimly conscious of that special endowment of poetical insight which, in his own felicitous phrase, is called:

“The vision and the faculty divine.”

This natural ability to discern the true poetical qualities of things he cultivated by the intense and accurate study of objects, and thus acquired a vast store of vivid ideas,—concepts afterwards reproduced in limpid language. In his own words:

“He had received

A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
*Upon his brain.”*¹

Wordsworth obtained his formal “education,” his academic scholarship, in a boarding school at Hawkshead, and at St. John’s College, Cambridge, graduating, at the age of twenty-one, with the degree of B.A. It is interesting to note that at St. John’s he was quartered in a room formerly occupied by Milton. The time consumed by the routine of university life he regarded, almost contemptuously, as a “long vacation;” but his vacations proper, devoted as they were to delightful touring in France and amid picturesque scenery in Great Britain, he thought immensely profitable in returns moral and intellectual.

After graduating he went to London, thence to France, where he remained for a year, and returned to England in 1792, deeply imbued with lessons taught by the French Revolution, then in progress. The principles of democracy took a strong hold upon his imagination; but Wordsworth was not destined for political

¹ Is not the attainment of this “active power” the chief aim and end of study, whether of nature or of books?

leadership. Poesy had marked him for her own. In the year after his return from France he published "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches," thus entering upon his long career of authorship.

In his twenty-fifth year, Wordsworth, comparatively poor and without a source of income, was the fortunate recipient of a legacy of £900, bequeathed by a friend who appreciated his genius. This pecuniary godsend, the first of a series of timely aids which fell to him like unexpected golden showers, enabled him to devote his time and energy to the far from idle business of poetry.

A very modest income sufficed to establish the poet and his sister Dorothy in a cottage in Racedown, Dorsetshire, in the year 1797. The constant companionship and literary sympathy of Dorothy Wordsworth with her brother William, whom she understood, loved, and honored, made their life beautiful, and has given biography one of its most pleasing chapters. The poet's sister was his nearest and dearest friend. Next to her in what may be called a spiritual intimacy with him came the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Wordsworth and Coleridge became acquainted in 1796. Hudson says: "Perhaps no two such men have ever met on English ground in this century." Certainly their mutual admiration was remarkable. Coleridge declared that Wordsworth had more of the genius of a philosophic poet than any other man he ever knew; and Wordsworth said that the only wonderful man he had ever known was Coleridge. The two were of great assistance to each other; each discovered in the other the congenial spirit to whom he "might confess the things he saw." The poets took long journeys together in England and on the Continent; they

walked and talked and meditated, in the high *camaraderie* of philosophers and seers; they read aloud to each other their writings, compared their ideas of style, exchanged criticism, and, in 1798, collaborated in publishing a volume of "Lyrical Ballads," in which were first given to the world poems strikingly original, such as "The Ancient Mariner" and "Tintern Abbey,"—works forming the basis of their authors' fame, and marking a new departure in the theory and practice of verse-making.

In the thirty-third year of his life Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson, a lady of fine culture and character, whose charms are immortalized in the poet's verses describing

"A perfect Woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

From the time of his marriage (1802) to the date of his death (April 23, 1850), the even current of the poet's life ran on like that of a deep, tranquil river. The last thirty-seven years were spent in the delightful seclusion of his home at Rydal Mount, near Grasmere. To him were born three sons and two daughters. In his children, and in the dear companionship of his wife and his sister, he found the serene joys of an ideal domestic life.

In the course of his fourscore years Wordsworth illustrated the beauty of that "plain living and high thinking" the decadence of which he deplored in one of his sonnets. What he wrote of Milton might be applied to himself:

"Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart."

He lived simply, modestly; he talked, read, rambled among the lakes of England, the mountains of Wales, the Yorkshire hills, in

France, and in the Rhine country. He murmured his verses to the sympathetic air, improvising while he walked or sat. He lived and breathed and had his being in his chosen vocation of poet, maker, who knew "to sing and build the lofty rime."

The events which Wordsworth regarded as of primary importance in forming his character and shaping his career are narrated in "The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind: An Autobiographical Poem." This personal record gives the story of the author's childhood and schooltime, his residence at Cambridge, his summer vacations, his books and amusements, his brief sojourn in London, and his residence in France. The eighth book is entitled "Love of Nature, Leading to Love of Man;" and the entire work is intended "to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them." Into "The Prelude," as into other poems, Wordsworth puts much of his own history, both objective and subjective; the man is revealed by his writings.

Critics name Wordsworth the great modern exponent of the poetry of nature. But he was not the first English poet to "return to nature," as the phrase goes. Gray returned to nature. Cowper foreshadowed Wordsworth in dim outline; "The Task" was a prototype of "The Excursion." Blake, Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, knew nature. And what shall we say of Burns? Burns was a "poet sown by nature,"—as truly a product of the soil as was the mountain daisy to which he recognized a kinship. The Scotch bard was, in some respects, Wordsworth's model. A glorious multitude of poets lived and wrote in Wordsworth's day, each inspiring all, and all inspiring each.

Leigh Hunt, in a humorous poem entitled "The Feast of the Poets," in which Apollo is represented as receiving his favorite

British poets at a banquet given in a London inn, enumerates, in pleasant jingle, the names of invited guests, including Rogers, Campbell, Landor, Crabbe, Scott, Byron, Moore, Keats, Shelley,

“And Southey, with looks
Like a man just awaked from the depth of his books,
And Coleridge, fine dreamer, with lutes in his rime,
And Wordsworth, the prince of the bards of his time.”

Like the “crowd,” the “host of golden daffodils” of his lyric, many and conspicuous were the singers of Wordsworth’s day, but he outsang them all. He ranks with the immortal few,—is one of the seven stars of first magnitude that have risen in the heavens of English poetry.¹

Though deeply read in the best poetry, Wordsworth did not draw much from the books of other men. He admired Shakespeare and Spenser, and

“Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton.”

Like Milton, he depended mainly upon his own genius. He resembles Milton in self-reliance, love of liberty, religious independence, and rigorous morality. What the great Puritan wrote of himself, Wordsworth might have written: “If God ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine.” Like Milton and Spenser,—but how unlike Shakespeare and Browning!—Wordsworth lacked humor. But, for that matter, so does the Bible.

All great poets are great teachers, and Wordsworth is one of

¹ Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning.

the greatest. "Of no other poet, except Shakespeare, have so many phrases become household words as of Wordsworth," says Lowell. Bagehot says, in his "Literary Studies": "Wordsworth perhaps comes as near to choice purity of style in sentiment as is possible." Carlyle, whose praise is precious, says Wordsworth's "concentration, his majesty, his pathos, have no parallel." The discriminating French critic, Edmond Scherer, pronounces Wordsworth "a very great poet, and at the same time one of those who lend themselves best to everyday intercourse,—a puissant and beneficent writer, who elevates us and makes us happy." In a similar vein are the words of the Hon. Roden Noel: "You are braced in the mountain atmosphere of this poet. You become stronger, more hopeful, encouraged to do your own work more vigorously and well." Another writer, R. H. Hutton, says finely and truly: "In Wordsworth's poems there will ever be a spring of something even fresher than poetic life,—a pure, deep well of solitary joy."

II. WRITINGS OF WORDSWORTH.

Wordsworth began to write verses at the age of fourteen, and continued active in literary work for a period of more than three-score years, producing his last poems when verging on the age of eighty. His most productive years were those of his most vigorous manhood, from 1798 to 1808, though he did much excellent work both before and after that inspired decade. The three years 1798, 1799, and 1800 were remarkably generous to Wordsworth's muse. Within the sixty-three years of his active literary career the great poet gave to the public more than a thousand poems, many of them sonnets and other short poems,

some very long. "The Prelude" has over eight thousand lines, and "The Excursion" is still longer. A complete chronological table, giving titles and dates of publication, and occupying thirty octavo pages, may be found in the seventh volume of the Aldine edition of Wordsworth's works.

The Wordsworthian literature is very extensive, a library in itself. Among the best editions of the author's works are the Moxon six-volume edition, Knight's standard edition in eleven large volumes, and Dowden's seven-volume edition. Matthew Arnold's small volume of choice selections from Wordsworth should be in every school library and on every student's bookshelf.

III. HINTS FOR STUDYING THE SELECTIONS IN THIS BOOK.

The poems grouped together in this text-book, designed chiefly for the use of students in high schools, but suitable also for the general reader, are selected from the best of Wordsworth's best. They are arranged in an order conceived by the editor to be conducive to very desirable educative results, intellectual, æsthetic, and moral. Perhaps no other poetry excels that of Wordsworth in the qualities tending to elevate character and purify taste.

In his preface to the "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth apprises his readers that "there will be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it." Thus warned by the author what not to look for in such poems as "Michael," "Tintern Abbey," "The Fountain," the student of Wordsworth will naturally ask, "What poetical merits are to be

sought in verse of this character?" The poet himself answers that his principal object "was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time to throw over them a certain *coloring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect*; and further and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them truly, though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our natures, chiefly as far as regards *the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement*."

In the poem "Michael," Wordsworth has fully achieved all that his theory proposes. The true poetical quality of the piece is to be found, not in ornamental diction or in rhetorical niceties, but in the essential truth, beauty, passion, and pathos of the simple incidents related and situations described, with a "certain coloring of imagination."

IV. THE TEXT AND NOTES.

The text of these selections has been compared with that of standard editions, particularly with that approved by Dowden, than whom there is no higher authority on Wordsworth's peculiarities. The poet made various changes in his writings from time to time, and his mode of punctuation and of using capital letters is part of his poetical design.

Wordsworth freely annotated his own poems, not so much with a view to explaining them as to furnish historical and personal data. A good many of his notes are reproduced in connection

with the several poems to which they relate. Other comments and remarks, invariably taken from good literary judges, are quoted for the purpose of inducing the student to realize the high esteem in which Wordsworth is held by the best critics. The editor's main object in borrowing these notes and in making others is to stimulate learners to help themselves.

What Professor Corson says, in his "Aims of Literary Study," concerning the secret of reading poetry, applies with special force to the study of Wordsworth's poems: "We can know a true poem only so far as we can reproduce it sympathetically within ourselves, —in other words, we know it to the extent to which our spirits respond to the spiritual appeal which it makes to us."

The intention of the comments and queries in the footnotes of this text-book is not so much to clear away difficulties as to incite the student to a solution of them, and thus to a true enjoyment of poetical literature. Only in the comments on the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" has anything like a complete elucidation been thought necessary, because the poetry of that great masterpiece, far from being simple and easy, is, as another has well said, "as intricate, elaborate, and abstruse, as remote from the ordinary paths of thought, as is to be found in literature."

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF WORDSWORTH'S LIFE.

YEAR	EVENT	WORDSWORTH'S AGE
1770,	April 7. William Wordsworth was born at Cocker- mouth, in Cumberland, England.	
1778.	Sent to grammar school at Hawkshead, near Eas- thwaite Lake	8
1783.	His father's death occurred	13
1784.	Wrote, at the age of fourteen, his first published verses, as a school exercise	14
1787.	Wordsworth entered St. John's College, Cambridge.	17
1788.	Spent a memorable vacation among the English lakes	18
1789.	Spent his vacation in northern England	19
1790.	Spent his vacation in France, Italy, Switzerland, and on the Rhine	20
1791.	Took degree B.A. Left the University. Went to London. Began a year of travel in France	21
1792.	Returned to England	22
1793.	Published "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches"	23
1795.	Received a bequest of £900 from Raisley Calvert. Began housekeeping with his sister Dorothy at Racedown, Dorsetshire	25
1796.	Became acquainted with S. T. Coleridge	26
1797.	Removed with his sister to Alfoxden	27

YEAR	EVENT	WORDSWORTH'S AGE
1798.	Published "Lyrical Ballads," at Bristol, in connection with Coleridge. Traveled in Germany with his sister and Coleridge	28
1799.	Returned to England. Removed to Dove Cottage, Grasmere	29
1802.	Married Mary Hutchinson	32
1803.	Made a six weeks' tour through Scotland with his sister Dorothy and Coleridge	33
1806-1807.	Lived in a farmhouse at Coleorton, Leicester .	36
1807.	Published "Poems," in two volumes	37
1809.	Published a pamphlet, "Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal"	39
1810.	Published a "Guide to the Lakes"	40
1813..	Removed to Rydal Mount, Grasmere, where he lived thirty-seven years until his death. Appointed stamp distributor for Westmoreland, with an income of £500, afterwards nearly doubled	43
1814.	Traveled in Scotland, visiting Yarrow, with James Hogg. Published "The Excursion"	44
1823.	Traveled in Belgium and Holland	53
1824.	Traveled through North Wales	54
1828.	Visited Belgium and the Rhine country with Coleridge .	58
1833.	Made his last visit to Scotland; revisited Yarrow with Walter Scott	63
1839.	Received the honorary degree D.C.L. from Oxford University	69
1842.	Received a pension of £300 per annum	72
1843.	Appointed poet laureate, to succeed Southey	73
1850, April 23.	Died, at the age of eighty	80

MICHAEL:

A PASTORAL POEM.¹

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll!²
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!³

¹ Michael is a typical Wordsworthian poem, much admired for its simplicity, purity, and pathos. It was written at Grasmere in 1800, when the author was thirty.

² A "ghyll" is a short, narrow valley or ravine, with a stream running through it. The word is also spelled "gill."

³ Dorothy Wordsworth, the poet's sister, wrote in her journal, October

And to that simple object appertains
 A story—unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved;—not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25
 Where was their occupation and abode.
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects led me on to feel 30
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35
 For the delight of a few natural hearts;
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.
 Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,¹

11, 1800: "After dinner, we walked up Greenhead Gill in search of a sheepfold. . . . The sheepfold is falling away. It is built nearly in the form of a heart, unequally divided."

¹ Do the winds have "meaning"?

Of blasts of every tone ; and oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, He heard the South 50
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.¹
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me!" 55
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
 The traveler to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 60
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed 65
 The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
 He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70
 Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honorable gain ;
 Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,²
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

¹ This simile is thoroughly Scottish.

² Not every reader appreciates this feeling; but in Wordsworth it was strong, like a passion. "A sort of biblical depth and solemnity," says Walter Pater, "hangs over this strange, new, passionate, pastoral world." "No other poet," says R. H. Hutton, "ever drew from simpler sources than Wordsworth, but none ever made so much out of so little."

His days had not been passed in singleness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
 Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
 Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
 It was because the other was at work. 85
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90
 With two brave sheep dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then
 Their labor did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain homemade cheese.¹ Yet, when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ 105
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.
 Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110

¹ Compare the frugal meal with the "halesome" supper of the Scotch farmer in Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
 An agèd útensil,¹ which had performed 115
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn,—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes;
 Living a life of eager industry.²
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,³
 Father and Son, while far into the night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighborhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,⁴
 And westward to the village near the lake; 135
 And from this constant light, so regular,
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named the EVENING STAR.
 Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs

1 Observe the accent on the words " agèd " and " útensil. "

2 A forcible line.

3 Why " sate " instead of " sat " ?

4 A " raise " is an ascent, a hill.

Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
 This Son of his old age was yet more dear—
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all— 145
 Than that a child, more than all other gifts
 That Earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
 And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the Young One in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
 Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door 165
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The CLIPPING TREE,¹ a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep

¹ "Clipping" is used in the north of England for "shearing."

By catching at their legs, or with his shouts 175
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;¹
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipped
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed 185
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;²
And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though naught was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights, 195
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 200
Feelings and emanations,—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
—Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived

¹ One of the very few figurative lines in this severely plain poem.

² A suggestive line.

From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet, if these fields of ours 230
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun[^]himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but 240
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak

Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free; 245
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it.¹ We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade; and Luke to him shall go, 250
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"

At this the old Man paused, 255
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence, 260
And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with peddler's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy 265
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And, at his birthplace, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 270

¹ This is brave language. The character of Michael was drawn from real life, or, at least, was suggested by the conduct of a particular man, Thomas Poole, of Nether Stowey. To him Wordsworth wrote: "I sometimes thought I was delineating such a man as you yourself would have been under the same circumstances." This brings to mind Burns's line in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*: "What Aiken in a cottage might have been."

These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed: "Well, Isabel, this scheme,
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me. 275
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.

—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
 Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 280
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long 285
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
 By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 290
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go: 295
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,

None to remember—do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
 The Youth made answer with a jocund¹ voice;
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;

¹ Give other instances of the use of this word by famous poets.

And all the ensuing week the house appeared 305
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which requests were added that forthwith 310
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel 315
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330
And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy. 335
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou

First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340
To newborn infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds 345
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed, 350
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou 355
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.”
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, “Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak. 360
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still 365
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and, when
At length their time was come, they were not loath
To give their bodies to the family mold. 370
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived;
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;

Till I was forty years of age, not more 375
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 380
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou should'st go."

At this the old Man paused;

Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 "This was a work for us; and now, my Son, 385
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.¹
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part; 390
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone, 395
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me 400
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us! —But I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner stone,
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men 405

¹ Commenting on this passage, Noel says: "What can be greater than the bald simplicity of the larger part of Michael—'a baldness as of mountain tops,' as Matthew Arnold well says? What can be more pathetic?"

Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
 A work which is not here:¹ a covenant
 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate 415
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
 And, as his Father had requested,
 Laid the first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420
 The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissèd² him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned.
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
 Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy 425
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well doing: and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
 "The prettiest letters that were ever seen." 435
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.

¹ This becomes pathetic when we learn that Michael did not finish the work. A poem, to be appreciated, must be known from beginning to end; the relation of each part to the whole must be seen and felt.

² Is it a fault or a felicity to force the accent on the syllable "-ed"?

So, many months passed on : and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour 440
 He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses : ignominy and shame 445
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would overset the brain, or break the heart : 450
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks 455
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time 460
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went, 465
 And never lifted up a single stone.¹

¹ "The right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and most characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from Michael : ' And never lifted up a single stone.' There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style strictly so called, at all ; yet it is an expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind " (MATTHEW ARNOLD).

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.¹
 The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand. 475
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the plowshare has been through the ground
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door; and the remains 480
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.²

¹ There is a fine touch of pathos in this.

² "It is not possible now to identify the precise site of 'the Sheepfold'"
 (DOWDEN).

WE ARE SEVEN.¹

— A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl: 5
She was eight years old, she said.
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad: 10
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

¹ This familiar poem, like most of Wordsworth's seemingly very simple lyrics, is one "where more is meant than meets the ear." Its deep intimation is that man is immortal, and death but a mode of life. Study the hidden sense of Wordsworth's poems—the soul, not merely the letter. This is a deep poem.

The following note by Wordsworth gives interesting particulars: "We are Seven I composed while walking in the grove at Alfoxden. My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said: 'A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
 How many may you be? "
 "How many? Seven in all," she said 15
 And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
 She answered, "Seven are we;
 And two of us at Conway dwell,
 And two are gone to sea. 20

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
 My sister and my brother;
 And, in the churchyard cottage, I
 Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell, 25
 And two are gone to sea,
 Yet ye are seven! —I pray you tell,
 Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
 "Seven boys and girls are we; 30
 Two of us in the churchyard lie,
 Beneath the churchyard tree."

meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus: 'A little child, dear brother *Jem*.' I objected to the rime 'dear brother *Jem*' as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend *James T——*'s name, who was familiarly called *Jem*. . . . I have only to add that in the spring of 1841 I revisited Goodrich Castle, not having seen that part of the Wye since I met the little Girl there in 1793. It would have given me greater pleasure to have found in the neighboring hamlet traces of one who had interested me so much; but that was impossible, as unfortunately I did not even know her name."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid, 35
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side. 40

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir, 45
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay, 50
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played, 55
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side." 60

"How many are you, then," said I,
 "If they two are in heaven?"
 Quick was the little Maid's reply,
 "O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead! 65
 Their spirits are in heaven!"
 'Twas throwing words away; for still
 The little Maid would have her will,
 And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

GENERAL NOTE.—To the "little maid" the idea of death was inconceivable. Compare or contrast with her unconscious faith, as expressed in the poem, the religious feeling in John Pierpont's verses entitled *My Child*, beginning:

"I cannot make him dead:
 His fair, sunshiny head
 Is ever bounding round my study chair."

Compare also Longfellow's *Resignation*, which contains the line:

"There is no death! What seems so is transition."

LUCY GRAY;¹

OR, SOLITUDE.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
 And, when I crossed the wild,
 I chanced to see at break of day
 The solitary child.³

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

1 "Written at Goslar in Germany. It was founded on a circumstance, told me by my sister, of a little girl who, not far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snowstorm. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body, however, was found in the canal. The way in which the incident was treated, and the spiritualizing of the character, might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavored to throw over common life with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of treating subjects of the same kind. This is not spoken to his disparagement, —far from it,—but to direct the attention of thoughtful readers, into whose hands these notes may fall, to a comparison that may both enlarge the circle of their sensibilities and tend to produce in them a catholic judgment" (WORDSWORTH).

² Can the student clearly see the appropriateness of the subtitle "Solitude"? A critic, H. Crabb Robinson, finds the main clew in the fifth stanza.

³ What does this mean? Did he see her phantom? Consider together the first and the last two stanzas.

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
 The hare upon the green ;
 But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
 Will nevermore be seen. 10

“To-night will be a stormy night—
 You to the town must go ;
 And take a lantern, Child, to light
 Your mother through the snow.” 15

“That, Father! will I gladly do :
 'Tis scarcely afternoon—
 The minster-clock has just struck two,
 And yonder is the moon!” 20

At this the Father raised his hook,
 And snapped a fagot-band ;
 He plied his work ;—and Lucy took
 The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
 With many a wanton stroke
 Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
 That rises up like smoke.¹ 25

The storm came on before its time :
 She wandered up and down ;
 And many a hill did Lucy climb :
 But never reached the town. 30

The wretched parents all that night
 Went shouting far and wide ;
 But there was neither sound nor sight
 To serve them for a guide. 35

¹ Accurate observation.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;¹
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door. 40

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
“In heaven we all shall meet;”
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downward from the steep hill’s edge 45
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same; 50
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank; 55
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild. 60

O’er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

¹ Have we moorlands in America?

THE PET LAMB:

A PASTORAL.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;
I heard a voice ; it said, " Drink, pretty creature, drink !"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb with a Maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near ; the lamb was all alone, 5
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail with pleasure
shook. 10

" Drink, pretty creature, drink," she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite,¹ a child of beauty rare !
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.

¹ " Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Barbara Lewthwaite, now living at Ambleside (1843), though much changed as to beauty, was one of two most lovely sisters. . . . Barbara Lewthwaite was not in fact the child whom I had seen and overheard as described in the poem. I chose the name for reasons implied in the above ; and will here add a caution against the use of names of

Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away : 15
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Toward the lamb she looked ; and from that shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face :
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing : 20

“ What ails thee, young One? what ? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be ;
Rest, little young One, rest ; what is't that aileth thee? 24

“ What is it thou would'st seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful thou art :
This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have no peers ;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

“ If the sun'be shining hot, do but stretch thy woolen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain ; 30
For rain and mountain storms, the like thou need'st not
fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

“ Rest, little young One, rest ; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away ;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by
none, 35
And thy mother from thy side forevermore was gone.

living persons. Within a few months after the publication of this poem, I was much surprised, and more hurt, to find it in a child's schoolbook which, having been compiled by Lindley Murray, had come into use at Grasmere School, where Barbara was a pupil ; and, alas ! I had the mortification of hearing that she was very vain of being thus distinguished, and in after life she used to say that she remembered the incident, and what I said to her upon the occasion ” (WORDSWORTH).

“ He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home :
A blessed day for thee! then whither would'st thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yearn
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been. 40

“ Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this
can

Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

“ Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now, 45
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plow;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

“ It will not, will not rest! — Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee? 1 50
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

“ Alas, the mountain tops that look so green and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play, 55
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

“ Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again!” 60

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song unto myself did I oftentimes repeat;

Explain this.

And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.¹

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ; 65
“Nay,” said I, “more than half to the damsel must belong ;
For she looked with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own.”²

¹ This is subtle ; does the reader comprehend it?

² This line is repeated ; why ? Try to realize what the poet means by the words “received her heart into my own.” The poem would be trivial were it not for the profound truth which it suggests regarding poetical inspiration and natural sympathy.

GENERAL NOTE. — The tripping but not too lively hexameters in which *The Pet Lamb* is written are well adapted for poems of this kind. Tennyson employs the same measure in *The May Queen*, which, like *The Pet Lamb*, is a blending of the cheerful and the pathetic. Wordsworth’s lyric skill in suiting thought and feeling to appropriate meters and stanza forms ought not to be overlooked.

NUTTING.¹

— It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out),
One of those heavenly days which cannot die ;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage threshold, sallying forth 5
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting crook in hand ; and turned my steps
Tow'rd the distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds² 10
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
Motley accouterment, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More ragged than need was! Among the woods,
And o'er the pathless rocks, I forced my way 15
Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation ; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung, 20

¹ Wordsworth tells us that in boyhood, like most of his schoolfellows, he was “an impassioned nutter.” Nutting, in England, is gathering hazelnuts. The poem is autobiographical, and was written in Germany in 1799.

² Garments.

A virgin¹ scene! —A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart
 As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet; —or beneath the trees I sat 25
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
 A temper known to those who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blessed
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves 30
 The violets of five seasons reappear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye;²
 Where fairy water breaks do murmur on
 Forever;³ and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And—with my cheek on one of those green stones 35
 That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
 Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure, 40
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage;⁴ and the shady nook 45
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up

¹ "Virgin" means, literally, to be green, to flourish.

² A very poetical way of saying "five years."

³ See Tennyson's Brook.

⁴ Compare Tennyson's lines in *Enoch Arden*:

"Down through the whitening hazels made a plunge
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
 Their tawny clusters."

Their quiet being: and, unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the past,
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and the intruding sky.—
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand 55
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.¹

¹ Bryant suggests the same fancy:

“Nay, doubt we not that under the rough rind,
 In the green veins of these fair growths of earth,
 There dwells a nature that receives delight
 From all the gentle processes of life,
 And shrinks from loss of being.”

Find the dozen consecutive lines in this beautiful poem that are most highly poetical.

TO A BUTTERFLY.¹

STAY near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart! 5
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days, 10
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline² and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs 15
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

¹ "Written," says Wordsworth, "in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, on Sunday, March 14, 1802. My sister and I were parted immediately after the death of our mother, who died in 1778, both being very young." The sister (Dorothy) wrote: "While we were at breakfast . . . he wrote the poem *To a Butterfly*. He ate not a morsel, but sate with his neck unbuttoned and his waistcoat open while he did it. The thought first came upon him as we were talking about the pleasure we both always felt at the sight of a butterfly. I told him that I used to chase them a little, but that I was afraid of brushing the dust off their wings. He told me how he used to kill all the white ones, when he went to school, because they were Frenchmen."

² So Wordsworth called his sister Dorothy in his poems.

TO A BUTTERFLY.¹

I'VE watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower ;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! —not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

5

This plot of orchard ground is ours ;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers ;
Here rest your wings when they are weary ;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong ;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young ;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

10

15

¹ Written in April, 1802. "The present poem, I take it, was meant as the conclusion of *Stay near Me*" (DOWDEN).

Are the two poems in the same mood? Which is the more artistic? which the more sincere? which the better?

TO A SKYLARK.¹

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing, 5
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faëry, 10
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me, high and high
To thy banqueting-place² in the sky. 15

¹ Professor Dowden says: "The following note from Wordsworth's MS. is given by Knight: 'Rydal Mount, 1825, where there are no skylarks; but the poet is everywhere.'" There are no skylarks in the United States, but the poets Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and others have made the song of skylark and nightingale familiar to the imagination of readers of poetry throughout the world. To compare the several famous poems on bird song would be a profitable literary pleasure for any student or teacher of poetry.

² Why "banqueting-place"?

Joyous as morning,
 Thou art laughing and scorning;
 Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
 And, though little troubled with sloth,
 Drunken¹ Lark! thou would'st be loath
 To be such a traveler as I.
 Happy, happy Liver,
 With a soul as strong as a mountain river
 Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,
 Joy and jollity be with us both!

20

25

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
 Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
 But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
 As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
 I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
 And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.²

30

¹ "Drunken" on what?

² Is a bird song or a poem of any moral or religious value?

TO A SKYLARK.¹

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!

Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?

Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,

5

Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;

A privacy of glorious light is thine;²

Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood

Of harmony, with instinct more divine;

10

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;

True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!³

¹ Also written at Rydal Mount, in 1825. This fine poem gives much in little,—much beauty, much thought.

² Emerson speaks of "the tumultuous *privacy* of storm."

³ The last couplet deserves careful, discriminating study.

TO THE DAISY.¹

BRIGHT flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow.

Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

5

Is it that Man is soon depressed?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblessed,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,

10

But Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

15

¹ This is the shortest and probably the best of no fewer than four excellent poems written by Wordsworth to the daisy, a flower which he calls "the poet's darling." Many British poets, from Chaucer down, have been inspired by the same modest flower. Read, in this connection, Burns's lines *To a Mountain Daisy*, and compare them with the present lyric, which is in the same meter. Wordsworth thinks the daisy "may be regarded, in its humble degree, as administering both to moral and to spiritual purposes."

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,

Yet pleased and willing ;

20

Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,

Thy function apostolical¹

In peace fulfilling.

¹ " I have been censured for the last line but one—' Thy function apostolical '—as being little less than profane. How could it be thought so? The word is adopted with reference to its derivation, implying something sent on a mission " (WORDSWORTH).

THE SPARROW'S NEST.¹

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy 5
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited. 10
She looked at it as if she feared it;
Dreading, though wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years 15
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy. 20

¹ "Written in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere. At the end of the garden of my father's house at Cockermouth was a high terrace that commanded a fine view of the river Derwent and Cockermouth Castle. This was our favorite playground. The terrace wall, a low one, was covered with closely clipped privet and roses, which gave an almost impervious shelter to birds that built their nests there. The latter of these stanzas alludes to one of those nests" (WORDSWORTH).

TO THE CUCKOO.¹

O BLITHE Newcomer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?²

While I am lying on the grass 5
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.³

Though babbling only to the Vale, 10
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me

¹ Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, in March, 1802. "In his Guide to the Lakes, Wordsworth writes: 'There is also an imaginative influence in the voice of the cuckoo, when the voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley'" (DOWDEN).

"There is no poem like that To the Cuckoo,—of all his poems Wordsworth's own darling" (R. H. HUTTON).

² "William tired himself with seeking an epithet for the cuckoo" (DOROTHY WORDSWORTH).

³ "The second stanza affords an excellent example of the attainment of

No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery; 15

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain 25
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be 30
An unsubstantial, faëry place;
That is fit home for Thee!

simplicity and beauty through elaboration. It is worth giving the several forms:

'While I am lying on the grass,
I hear thy restless shout;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
About and all about!' (1807)

'While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites the ear!
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!' (1815)

'It seems to fill the whole air's space' (1820).

DOWDEN.

DAFFODILS.¹

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud²

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 10

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they

Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay, 15

In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:³

¹ "The daffodils grew, and still grow, on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves" (WORDSWORTH).

² "Lone as a solitary cloud" (BYRON, in *Prisoner of Chillon*).

³ "Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought."

EMERSON, *The Apology*.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
• Which is the bliss of solitude; ¹
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

20

¹ Lines 21, 22, were written by Mary Wordsworth, the poet's wife. Professor Dowden, quoting the two "admirable lines," remarks of their author that "her interest in literature was genuine, her taste was sure." He mentions Wordsworth's writing in a letter that these lines, "if thoroughly felt, would annihilate nine tenths of the reviews of the kingdom."

Will no one tell me what she sings?—

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,

And battles long ago :

20

Or is it some more humble lay,

Familiar matter of to-day ?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,

That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang

25

As if her song could have no ending ;

I saw her singing at her work,

And o'er the sickle bending ;—

I listened, motionless and still ;

And, as I mounted up the hill,

30

The music in my heart I bore,

Long after it was heard no more.

“SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT.”¹

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ; 5
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From Maytime and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet 15
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

¹ Written in honor of Mary Wordsworth, the poet's wife. The author's note is: "The germ of this poem was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious."

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;¹
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveler between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.² 30

¹ Can you justify, from any dictionary or otherwise, this use of the word "machine"? In what sense does the poet employ it?

² This is Wordsworth's ideal woman and wife. Compare it with other tributes of great poets to their wives.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

“UP, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton’s grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.”

—Of coats and of jackets gray, scarlet, and green, 5
On the slopes of the pastures all colors were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green boxwood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin¹ at Timothy’s door; 10
A coffin through Timothy’s threshold had passed;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse, and the horn, and the hark! hark away!
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut 15
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
“The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead.”
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek. 20

¹ “When I was a child at Cockermouth, no funeral took place without a basin filled with sprigs of boxwood being placed upon a table, covered with a white cloth, in front of the house. The huntings on foot, in which the old man is supposed to join as here described, were common occurrences in our vale” (WORDSWORTH).

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.¹

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud ; it has sung for three years :
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.²

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her? She sees 5
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail ; 10
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise, 15
And the colors have all passed away from her eyes.

¹ " Instead of trivial, . . . the poems about Lucy, the *Reverie of Poor Susan*, *We are Seven*, . . . are perfect poetry " (Hon. RODEN NOEL).

² " This [poem] arose out of my observation of the affecting music of these birds, hanging in this way in the London streets, during the freshness and stillness of the spring morning " (WORDSWORTH).

“STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN.”¹

STRANGE fits of passion have I known ;
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day 5
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye
All over the wide lea ; 10
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot ;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot 15
Came near, and nearer still.

¹ This and the four following “ Lucy poems,” wonderful in their delicate simplicity and deep pathos, and surcharged with the very soul of Wordsworth's feeling and art, are among the author's most celebrated and most characteristic productions. Of the person here sung, under the name of

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

20

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide 25
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

Lucy, almost nothing is known. Surely the poems show the depth and tenderness of Wordsworth's heart. Every stanza and every line in the series of poems must be lovingly studied to be truly understood.

“THREE YEARS SHE GREW.”

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, “A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This Child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make 5
A Lady of my own.

“ Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse ; and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

“ She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ; 15
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

“ The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ; 20

Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the Storm
 Grace that shall mold the Maiden's form
 By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
 To her; and she shall lean her ear
 In many a secret place
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
 And beauty born of murmuring sound
 Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight¹
 Shall rear her form to stately height,
 Her virgin bosom swell;
 Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
 While she and I together live 35
 Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done;
 How soon my Lucy's race was run!
 She died, and left to me
 This heath, this calm, and quiet scene; 40
 The memory of what has been,
 And nevermore will be.²

¹ What are "vital feelings of delight"?

² "If any one doubts the real affinity between the expressions written on the face of nature and those human expressions which so early interpret themselves, even to infants, that to account for them except as a natural language seems impossible, the exquisite poem on Lucy ought to convert him" (R. H. HUTTON).

“SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.”

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone 5
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know 10
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL."

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
I had no human fears :
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
She neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.¹

5

¹ "Most sad but wonderful verses" (R. NOEL).

"I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN."

I TRAVELED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea ;
Nor, England ! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream ! 5
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time ; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire ; 10
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played ;
And thine too is the last green field 15
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

We walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun ;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he, 5
With hair of glittering gray ;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass
And by the steaming rills, 10
We traveled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun ;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun, 15
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain top,
To me he made reply ; 20

" Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

" And just above yon slope of corn 25
Such colors, and no other,
Were in the sky that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

" With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave, 30
And, to the churchyard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

" Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang ;—she would have been 35
A very nightingale.

" Six feet in earth my Emma lay ;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day,
I e'er had loved before. 40

" And turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points¹ of morning dew.

" A basket on her head she bare ; 45
Her brow was smooth and white :
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

¹ This is an English use of the word " point," probably suggested by the pendent tags on old point lace.

" No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free ;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea. 50

" There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine ;
I looked at her, and looked again : —
And did not wish her mine ! " ¹ 55

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding ² in his hand. 60

¹ To divine why Matthew did not wish her his is to feel the force of the poem. Poetry often appeals to our sensibilities even more than to our intellect.

² Wild crab apple.

THE FOUNTAIN:¹

A CONVERSATION.

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak, 5
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match 10
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rimes 15
Which you last April made!"

¹ Lovers of Wordsworth set high value on this poem as representing his best genius and method. Matthew Arnold says: "If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to show Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as Michael, The Fountain, The Highland Reaper."

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The gray-haired man of glee:

20

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'T will murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

25

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

30

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

35

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

40

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rimes
About the crazy old church clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

YARROW UNVISITED.¹

[See the various poems ² the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite ballad of Hamilton, beginning:

“Busk ³ ye, busk ye, my bonnie, bonnie bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!” ⁴]

FROM Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unraveled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had traveled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my “winsome Marrow,”
“Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
And see the Braes⁵ of Yarrow.”

5

¹ “At Clovenford, being so near to the Yarrow, we could not but think of the possibility of going thither, but came to the conclusion of reserving the pleasure for some future time, in consequence of which, after our return, William wrote the poem” (DOROTHY WORDSWORTH’S Journal, September 18, 1803).

² Among these are The Braes of Yarrow, by John Logan, and The Dowie Dens of Yarrow, author unknown. William Hamilton’s ballad, The Braes of Yarrow, of thirty four-line stanzas, is found in many collections.

³ To make ready; to prepare; to array.

⁴ Provincial English and Scotch for companion, mate, or associate.

⁵ Slopes; hills.

"Let Yarrow folk, frae,¹ Selkirk Town,
 Who have been buying, selling, 10
 Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
 Each maiden to her dwelling!
 On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
 Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
 But we will downward with the Tweed, 15
 Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,²
 Both lying right before us;
 And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
 The lintwhites³ sing in chorus; 20
 There's pleasant Teviotdale, a land
 Made blithe with plow and harrow:
 Why throw away a needful day
 To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare, 25
 That glides the dark hills under?
 There are a thousand such elsewhere
 As worthy of your wonder."
 —Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
 My True-love sighed for sorrow; 30
 And looked me in the face, to think
 I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,⁴
 And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
 Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,⁵ 35
 But we will leave it growing.

¹ From.

² "Haughs," low-lying, rich lands.

³ Linnets. "Her song the lintwhite swelleth" (TENNYSON'S *Claribel*).

⁴ Bottom lands.

⁵ This line is an exact quotation from William Hamilton's *Braes of Yarrow*.

O'er hilly path, and open Strath,¹
 We'll wander Scotland thorough;
 But, though so near, we will not turn
 Into the dale of Yarrow.

40

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
 The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
 The swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
 Float double, swan and shadow!
 We will not see them; will not go,
 To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
 Enough if in our hearts we know
 There's such a place as Yarrow.

45

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
 It must, or we shall rue it:

50

We have a vision of our own;
 Ah! why should we undo it?

The treasured dreams of times long past,
 We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
 For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
 'Twill be another Yarrow!²

55

"If care with freezing years should come,
 And wandering seem—but folly,—
 Should we be loath to stir from home,
 And yet be melancholy;
 Should life be dull, and spirits low,
 'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
 That earth has something yet to show,
 The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

60

¹ Valley.

² Professor Shairp regards this stanza as by far the finest in a poem which is excellent throughout.

GENERAL NOTE.—To appreciate the Yarrow poems, one should know something of the geography of the region described, something also of its history and traditions.

YARROW VISITED,¹

SEPTEMBER, 1814.

AND is this—Yarrow? *This*—the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
Oh that some Minstrel's harp were near, 5
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings; 10
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills 15
Is in the mirror slighted.

1 "As mentioned in my verses on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd, my first visit to Yarrow was in his company. We had lodged the night before at Traquhair, where Hogg had joined us, and also Dr. Anderson, the editor of the British Poets, who was on a visit at the Manse. Dr. A. walked with us till we came in view of the vale of Yarrow, and, being advanced in life, he then turned back . . . I seldom read or think of this poem without regret-

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
 Save where that pearly whiteness
 Is round the rising sun diffused,
 A tender hazy brightness; 20
 Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
 All profitless dejection;
 Though not unwilling here to admit
 A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower¹ 25
 Of Yarrow vale lay bleeding?
 His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
 On which the herd is feeding:
 And haply from this crystal pool,
 Now peaceful as the morning, 30
 The Water-wraith² ascended thrice—
 And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
 The haunts of happy Lovers,
 The path that leads them to the grove, 35
 The leafy grove that covers:

ting that my dear sister was not of the party, as she would have had so much delight in recalling the time when, traveling together in Scotland, we declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion" (WORDSWORTH).

¹ Cf Logan's *The Braes of Yarrow*:

"For never on thy banks shall I
 Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow."

² A supposed water spirit, whose appearance prognosticates death or woe to the person seeing it. Cf. Campbell's *Lord Ullin's Daughter*:

"By this the storm grew loud apace:
 The water-wraith was shrieking."

And Pity sanctifies the Verse
 That paints, by strength of sorrow,
 The unconquerable strength of love;
 Bear witness, rueful Yarrow! 40

But thou, that didst appear so fair
 To fond imagination,
 Dost rival in the light of day
 Her delicate creation :
 Meek loveliness is round thee spread, 45
 A softness still and holy ;
 The grace of forest charms decayed,
 And pastoral melancholy.¹

That region left, the vale unfolds
 Rich groves of lofty stature, 50
 With Yarrow winding through the pomp
 Of cultivated nature ;
 And, rising from those lofty groves,
 Behold a Ruin hoary!
 The shattered front of Newark's Towers, 55
 Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
 For sportive youth to stray in ;
 For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
 And age to wear away in! 60
 Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
 A covert for protection
 Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
 The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day, 65
 The wildwood fruits to gather,

¹ " No words in the language penetrate more truly and deeply into the very heart of nature " (SHAIRP).

And on my True-love's forehead plant
 A crest of blooming heather!
 And what if I inwreathed my own!
 'Twere no offense to reason;
 The sober Hills thus decked their brows
 To meet the wintry season.

70

I see—but not by sight alone,
 Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
 A ray of fancy still survives—
 Her sunshine plays upon thee!¹
 Thy ever-youthful waters keep
 A course of lively pleasure;
 And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
 Accordant to the measure.

75

80

The vapors linger round the Heights,
 They melt, and soon must vanish;
 One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
 Sad thought, which I would banish,
 But that I know, where'er I go,
 Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
 Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
 And cheer my mind in sorrow:

85

¹ In lines 73-76 find the key to unlock the inmost meanings of the poem.

GENERAL NOTE.—Read the chapter entitled *The Three Yarrows*, in Professor J. C. Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*.

YARROW REVISITED.

[The following stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott, and other friends visiting the banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford for Naples.]

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;¹
Once more,² by Newark's castle gate 5
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing 10
In gentle bosoms, while sear leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot 15
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;

¹ In 1814.

² In 1831.

And slept in many a crystal pool
 For quiet contemplation : 20
 No public and no private care
 The freeborn mind intralling,
 We made a day of happy hours,
 Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of Youth, 25
 With freaks of graceful folly,—
 Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
 Her Night not melancholy ;
 Past, present, future, all appeared
 In harmony united, 30
 Like guests that meet, and some from far,
 By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
 And down the meadow ranging,
 Did meet us with unaltered face, 35
 Though we were changed and changing ;
 If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
 Our inward prospect over,
 The soul's deep valley was not slow
 Its brightness to recover. 40

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
 And her divine employment!
 The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
 For hope and calm enjoyment ;
 Albeit sickness, lingering yet, 45
 Has o'er their pillow brooded ;
 And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
 Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
 Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot 50

For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
 And leave thy Tweed and Teviot
 For mild Sorrento's breezy waves;
 May classic fancy, linking
 With native fancy her fresh aid, 55
 Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
 Each vying with the other,
 May Health return to mellow Age
 With Strength, her venturous brother; 60
 And Tiber, and each brook and rill
 Renowned in song and story,
 With unimagined beauty shine,
 Nor lose one ray of glory.

For Thou, upon a hundred streams, 65
 By tales of love and sorrow,
 Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
 Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
 And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
 Wherever they invite Thee, 70
 At parent Nature's grateful call,
 With gladness must requite Thee.¹

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
 Such looks of love and honor
 As thy own Yarrow gave to me 75
 When first I gazed upon her;
 Beheld what I had feared to see,
 Unwilling to surrender
 Dreams treasured up from early days,
 The holy and the tender. 80

¹ "Alas! how different was the reality!" (SHAIRP.)

And what, for this frail world, were all
 That mortals do or suffer,
 Did no responsive harp, no pen,
 Memorial tribute offer?
 Yea, what were mighty Nature's self? 85
 Her features, could they win us,
 Unhelped by the poetic voice
 That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localized Romance
 Plays false with our affections; 90
 Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
 For fanciful dejections:
 Ah, no! the visions of the past
 Sustain the heart in feeling
 Life as she is—our changeful Life, 95
 With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye,¹ whose thoughts that day
 In Yarrow's groves were centered;
 Who through the silent portal arch
 Of moldering Newark entered; 100
 And clomb the winding stair that once
 Too timidly was mounted
 By the "last Minstrel,"² (not the last!)
 Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on forever, Yarrow Stream! 105
 Fulfill thy pensive duty,
 Well pleased that future Bards should chant
 For simple hearts thy beauty;

¹ In the party were Scott, Wordsworth, Wordsworth's daughter Dora, Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart, and others.

² The reference is to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, a tale in verse. Wordsworth says: "I first became acquainted with this great and amiable

To dreamlight dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine, 110
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

man—Sir Walter Scott—in the year 1803, when my sister and I, making a tour in Scotland, were hospitably received by him in Lanwade upon the banks of the Esk, where he was then living.”

GENERAL NOTE.—The flowing meter and easy rime of the Yarrow poems, imitated from early ballads, add much to the charm of these pensive lyrics. The poems abound with felicitous lines, which, if the pupil cannot discover them, the teacher might point out. Even the dainty taste of Walter Pater found in Wordsworth's poetry an extraordinary number and variety of short passages so pleasing to the literary palate that he called them delicious “ morsels.” It is recorded in Wordsworth's *Memoirs* that Coleridge said to the author of the Yarrows: “ Since Milton I know of no poet with so many felicitous and unforgettable lines and stanzas as you.”

LINES¹

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY,
ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING
A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have passed ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

¹ " No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been

These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines 15
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din 25
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too 30
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, 35
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world, 40
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—

said in these Notes" (The Lyrical Ballads, as first published at Bristol by Cottle) (WORDSWORTH).

The French critic, Edmond Scherer, wrote of this poem: "All the poet is in this piece, where depth of sentiment has found perfect expression, and which is almost sufficient, when translated, to give a knowledge of Wordsworth and of his genius."

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep 45
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh, how oft— 50
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, 55
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope, 65
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever Nature led: more like a man 70
 Flying from something that he dreads than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint 75
 What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colors and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this 85
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
 Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned
 To look on Nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes 90
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime 95
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world 105
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,¹
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

¹ "This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect" (WORDSWORTH). Cf. Young's *Night Thoughts*, VI. 424 :

"And half create the wondrous world they see."

In Nature and the language of the sense
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110
 Of all my moral being.¹

Nor, perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend, 115
 My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once, 120
 My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy : for she can so inform 125
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ; 135
 And let the misty mountain winds be free
 To blow against thee : and, in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

¹ "The essential spirit of the lines on Tintern Abbey was for practical purposes as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount" (F. W. H. MYERS).

Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 140
 Thy memory be as a dwelling place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; Oh ! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 145
 And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream 150
 We stood together ; and that I, so long
 A worshiper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love—Oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget 155
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

GENERAL NOTE.—This is an oft-studied poem, in which hundreds of readers find deep delight. The student reading it for the first time will probably recognize felicitous passages made familiar by frequent quotation. The ability to select such passages without suggestion from the teacher is one measure of the pupil's literary power. The student must think and feel for himself.

In this contemplative poem, usually called Tintern Abbey, sometimes The Wye, Wordsworth beautifully expresses his favorite doctrine or philosophy that nature is God's agency for the elevation and pacification of man's soul. The poet finds in natural objects and in the human heart a sufficing morality, religion, and joy. Nature is his teacher, for "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her."

ODE TO DUTY.¹

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!²

O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

5

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,

10

¹ By creating this poem, Wordsworth added a literary jewel and a moral treasure to the riches of the world. Not a syllable of the Ode to Duty could be spared. It cannot be read too often, studied too minutely, or applied too severely, as the author applied it, not to his neighbor, but to himself. Each stanza is nearly perfect in itself, but the theme rises from line to line, as on golden steps, to the climax:

"Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong."

The concluding stanza is simply a prayer,—a humble supplication to the Daughter of the Voice of God.

² Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, IX. 652:

"God so commanded; and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice."

Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth :
 Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
 Who do thy work, and know it not :
 Oh! if through confidence misplaced 15
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around
 them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security. 20
 And they a blissful course may hold
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
 Live in the spirit of this creed ;
 Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried, 25
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust :
 And oft, when in my heart was heard
 Thy tiny mandate, I deferred 30
 The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,
 I supplicate for thy control ; 35
 But in the quietness of thought :
 Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
 I feel the weight of chance desires :
 My hopes no more must change their name,
 I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace:
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds, 45
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend 50
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give; 55
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

"To the attentive and competent reader, the whole sufficiently explains itself, but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or experiences of my own mind, on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere:

‘ A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death? ’

But it was not so much from the source of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times, while going to school, have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines :

‘ . . . obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings,’ etc.

To that dreamlike vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here ; but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons,

that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favor. Accordingly, a preëxistent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations, and among all persons acquainted with classic literature is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' I took hold of the notion of preëxistence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

'The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.' "

WORDSWORTH.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS¹ OF IMMORTALITY,

FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,²
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,

¹ Much depends upon the pupil's understanding the whole title of the ode, especially the word "Intimations."

² Those living in the celestial light are least conscious of it. The poem is retrospective.

Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair ; 15
 The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young lambs bound 20
 As to the tabor's sound,
 To me alone there came a thought of grief ;
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong.
 The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ;¹ 25
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng ;
 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,²
 And all the earth is gay ;
 Land and sea 30
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every Beast keep holiday ;—
 Thou Child of Joy, 34
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd Boy !³

IV.

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make ; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal, 40

¹ A sonorous line.² Explain " fields of sleep."³ Read in Tennyson's *Break, Break, Break* :

O well for the fisherman's boy

" That he shouts with his sister at play," etc.

The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 O evil day! if I were sullen
 While the Earth herself is adorning
 This sweet May morning,
 And the Children are culling 45
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,¹
 A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat: 55
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

v.²

Theme

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:³
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home: 65

¹ In lines 19–50 the feeling of the poet's voluntary participation in the general joy of youth and spring is wrought up; but with line 51 begins a confession of man's lapse from childhood's heavenly state,—a sad consciousness that the "gleam" has fled.

² In the fifth and following stanzas of the ode the poet suggests a possible explanation of the man's loss of power to see the things that he once saw in tree and field and flower.

³ A forgetting of a former existence in heaven or God, our original home.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy;¹
 Shades of the prison house² begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows
 He sees it in his joy;³ 70
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,⁴
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away, 75
 And fade into the light of common day.⁵

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim, 80
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster Child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.⁶

¹ Why so? Concerning lines 58-66, Noel exclaims: "What can be more stately in expression? How well married are sense, phrase, and sound!"

² This earth life; the world.

³ Note the force of this line. The joy is the cause of, as well as the consequence of, the vision of light.

⁴ A priest reveals to man the mysteries of God. So the child, possessed of the secret of immortality, is nature's interpreter.

⁵ "The vision splendid," the soul's natural light, our inborn consciousness of divine origin, is obscured by worldly interests, and grows dim, as the morning star fades in daylight.

⁶ Our mother earth, that is, this mortal state or life, is compared to a foster mother, kindly and faithful to her charge, but not a real mother. Man is orphaned from his spiritual parent, and exiled from the "imperial palace," his celestial home.

VII.¹

Behold the Child among his newborn blisses, 85
 A six years' Darling² of a pygmy size!
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, 90
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly learnèd art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 95
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage; 105
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII.³

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;

¹ This stanza epitomizes man's life on earth. The soul is alienated from its divine instincts, and the celestial vision dimmed by man's becoming naturalized, as it were, in mundane duties and pleasures foreign to "the glories he hath known." (See Pope's *Essay on Man*, II. lines 275-282.)

² This refers to the child Hartley Coleridge.

³ Lines 108-128 describe the little child, around whose being heaven yet

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent,¹ read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted forever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest, 115
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? 125
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX.

O joy! that in our embers²
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!

lies, as one saturated with and illuminated by the consciousness of immortality,—one whose soul is aware of all truth, and who knows and sees truth intuitively, not through a process of reasoning, but because he cannot err, being God's "mighty Prophet." This recalls the Scripture that God reveals to babes what is hidden from the wise and prudent. This eighth stanza is perhaps the most difficult in the ode.

¹ "Deaf and silent." The philosopher who yet doth keep his "heritage," viz., experience of celestial life, need not hear instruction or tell what he knows. He is an eye, and sees eternal truth, and seeing is believing.

² As in ashes some sparks of fire glow, so in age men have "recollections

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blessed— 135
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;¹ 140
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;²
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized, 145
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:³
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,⁴ 150
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence; truths that wake, 155

of early childhood," and these give "intimations," not positive proofs, of the soul's immortality, or at least of its former existence.

¹ Wordsworth remembers and is grateful for his past years of childhood, not because those years gave him delight, liberty, and hope, though these were dear to him.

² See Introductory Note. It often seemed to the poet in his childhood that his consciousness was the only reality, and that the material world might be an illusion.

³ Our immortal part rebukes the unworthy tendencies of the bodily affections. "High instincts" demand that the soul remember its origin and be worthy of immortal life.

⁴ Wordsworth does not allege that his poem furnishes any definite proof of immortality. Nevertheless, he holds that "those shadowy recollections" serve a high practical purpose in this life.

To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy
 Can utterly abolish or destroy! 160
 Hence, in a season of calm weather ¹
 Though inland far we be,
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither, 165
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.²

X.³

Then sing, ye Birds! sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound! 170
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once so bright 175
 Be now forever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind ; 180

¹ That is, when the mind is unperturbed.

² It is common with poets to compare life to a continent, and death and immortality to a boundless ocean. Read Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*.

³ Lines 168-186 recall the mind to the subjects of the third and fourth stanzas, but the mood of the poet has changed. He pensively submits to the inevitable loss which time must bring, and takes solace in what remains. Lines 181-186 demand close attention and study.

In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be ;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering ;
 In the faith that looks through death, 185
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.¹

And oh, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
 Think not of any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might ;
 I only have relinquished one delight 190
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;
 The innocent brightness of a newborn Day
 Is lovely yet ; 195
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober coloring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live, 200
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

¹ The great ode concludes with an invocation and a fervent expression of gratitude that, though "the glory and the freshness of a dream" have long since fled, the poet yet, through sympathy with nature and man, finds a compensation for lost youth in the acquisition of a tender humanity which invests the meanest flower, not with "celestial light," but with power to give "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

“MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD.”¹

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

5

¹ Written at Town-End, Grasmere, March 26, 1802. Dorothy Wordsworth says in her journal: “While I was getting into bed, he wrote *The Rainbow*. . . . William very nervous. After he was in bed, haunted with altering *The Rainbow*.” In his Introductory Note to the Ode on Intimations of Immortality (page 102), Wordsworth quotes the last three lines of this stanza. See in the same ode, line 10, “The Rainbow comes and goes.”

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE,
IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAU-
MONT.¹

I WAS thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile!²
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air! 5
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings: 10
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,

¹ "Sir George Beaumont painted two pictures of this subject, one of which he gave to Mrs. Wordsworth, saying she ought to have it; but Lady Beaumont interfered, and after Sir George's death she gave it to Sir Uvedale Price, in whose house at Foxley I have seen it" (WORDSWORTH).

² Wordsworth spent four weeks near Peele Castle, Lancashire.

The light that never was, on sea or land,¹ 15
 The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,
 Amid a world how different from this!
 Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
 On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss. 20

Thou should'st have seemed a treasure house divine
 Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
 Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
 The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, 25
 Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
 No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
 Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
 Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,
 A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
 I have submitted to a new control:
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore; 35
 A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.²

Not for a moment could I now behold
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

¹ The rare felicity of this line is universally recognized.

² The poet's brother, John Wordsworth, who had lately been drowned at sea.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate work! —yet wise and well, 45
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labors in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves, 50
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known, 55
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sight of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD,²
THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HON-
ORS OF HIS ANCESTORS.

“ From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last ;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming :
Both roses flourish, red and white ;
In love and sisterly delight

² "Henry, Lord Clifford, was deprived of his estate and honors during the space of twenty-four years; all which time he lived as a shepherd in Yorkshire or in Cumberland, where the estate of his father-in-law (Sir Lancelot Threlkeld) lay. He was restored to his estate and honors in the first year of Henry VII." (WORDSWORTH).

The two that were at strife are blended,
 And all old troubles now are ended.—
 Joy! joy to both! but most to her 15
 Who is the flower of Lancaster!
 Behold her how She smiles to-day
 On this great throng, this bright array!
 Fair greeting doth she send to all
 From every corner of the hall; 20
 But chiefly from above the board
 Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
 A Clifford to his own restored!

“They came with banner, spear, and shield;
 And it was proved in Bosworth field. 25
 Not long the Avenger was withstood—
 Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
 St. George was for us, and the might
 Of blessèd Angels crowned the right.
 Loud voice the Land has uttered forth, 30
 We loudest in the faithful North:
 Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
 Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
 Our strong abodes and castles see
 The glory of their loyalty. 35

“How glad is Skipton¹ at this hour—
 Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
 Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
 We have them at the feast of Brough'm.¹
 How glad Pendragon¹—though the sleep 40
 Of years be on her!—She shall reap
 A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
 As in a dream her own renewing.

¹ Old castles belonging to the Clifford family.

Rejoiced is Brough,¹ right 'glad, I deem,
 Beside her little humble stream ; 45
 And she that keepeth watch and ward
 Her statelier Eden's course to guard ;
 They both are happy at this hour,
 Though each is but a lonely Tower :—
 But here is perfect joy and pride 50
 For one fair House by Emont's side,
 This day distinguished without peer,
 To see her Master and to cheer—
 Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

“ Oh! it was a time forlorn 55
 When the fatherless was born—
 Give her wings that she may fly,
 Or she sees her infant die!
 Swords that are with slaughter wild
 Hunt the Mother and the Child. 60
 Who will take them from the light?
 —Yonder is a man in sight—
 Yonder is a house—but where?
 No, they must not enter there.
 To the caves, and to the brooks, 65
 To the clouds of heaven she looks ;
 She is speechless, but her eyes
 Pray in ghostly agonies.
 Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
 Maid and Mother undefiled, 70
 Save a Mother and her Child!

“ Now Who is he that bounds with joy
 On Carrock's side, a Shepherd Boy?
 No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
 Light as the wind along the grass. 75

¹ See Note 1, p. 117.

Can this be He who hither came
 In secret, like a smothered flame?
 O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
 For shelter, and a poor man's bread?
 God loves the Child; and God hath willed 80
 That those dear words should be fulfilled,
 The Lady's words, when forced away
 The last she to her Babe did say;
 'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
 I may not be; but rest thee, rest, 85
 For lowly Shepherd's life is best!'

"Alas! when evil men are strong
 No life is good, no pleasure long.
 The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
 And leave Blencathara's rugged coves, 90
 And quit the flowers that summer brings
 To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
 Must vanish, and his careless cheer
 Be turned to heaviness and fear.
 —Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise! 95
 Hear it, good man, old in days!
 Thou tree of covert and of rest!
 For this young Bird that is distressed;
 Among thy branches safe he lay,
 And he was free to sport and play, 100
 When falcons were abroad for prey.

"A recreant harp, that sings of fear
 And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
 I said, when evil men are strong,
 No life is good, no pleasure long, 105
 A weak and cowardly untruth!
 Our Clifford was a happy Youth,

And thankful through a weary time,
 That brought him up to manhood's prime.
 —Again he wanders forth at will, 110
 And tends a flock from hill to hill:
 His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
 Such garb with such a noble mien;
 Among the Shepherd grooms no mate
 Hath he, a Child of strength and state! 115
 Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
 Nor yet for higher sympathy.
 To his side the fallow deer
 Came, and rested without fear;
 The eagle, lord of land and sea, 120
 Stooped down to pay him fealty;
 And both the undying fish¹ that swim
 Through Bowscale tarn did wait on him;
 The pair were servants of his eye
 In their immortality; 125
 And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
 Moved to and fro, for his delight.
 He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
 Upon the mountains visitant;
 He hath kenned them taking wing: 130
 And into caves where Faeries sing
 He hath entered; and been told
 By Voices how men lived of old.
 Among the heavens his eye can see
 Face of thing that is to be; 135
 And, if that men report him right,
 His tongue could whisper words of might.
 —Now another day is come,
 Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
 He hath thrown aside his crook, 140
 And hath buried deep his book;

¹ Allusion to the superstition that there were two immortal fish in the tarn.

Armor rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—
Bear me to the heart of France, 145
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour, 150
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a reappearing Star,
Like a glory from afar, 155
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed. 160

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.¹

In him the savage virtue of the Race, 165
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts, were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honored more and more; 170
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

¹ "These lines describe Wordsworth perfectly" (NOEL).

“SCORN NOT THE SONNET.”¹

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart;² the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's³ wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso⁴ sound; 5
With it Camoëns⁵ soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante⁶ crowned
His visionary brow: a glowworm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser,⁷ called from Faëryland 10
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton,⁸ in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

¹ “Composed, almost extempore, in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake” (WORDSWORTH).

² Critics find in Shakespeare's sonnets (a series of 154) a revelation of the great poet's inner life.

³ Famous Italian poet (1304-1374), who wrote many sonnets to “Laura,” the cause of his “wound.”

⁴ Italian poet (1544-1595), author of *Jerusalem Delivered*, etc.

⁵ Celebrated Portuguese poet (1524-1580), author of *The Lusiad*, etc.

⁶ Dante's (1265-1321) sonnets, compared with his sublime and severe *Divina Commedia*, are as the myrtle, symbol of joy and love, mingled with the cypress, emblem of death.

⁷ The author of *The Faërie Queene* (1552-1599) wrote many sonnets.

⁸ Milton's (1608-1674) sonnets are few but mighty. See Wordsworth's sonnet entitled *London*, on page 128.

“IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING,
CALM AND FREE.”¹

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven broods o’er the Sea : 5
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, 10
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
Thou liest in Abraham’s bosom all the year ;
And worship’st at the Temple’s inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

¹ “ This was composed on the beach near Calais, in the autumn of 1802 ”
(WORDSWORTH).

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

SEPTEMBER 3, 1802.¹

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare, 5
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill ; 10
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

¹ " Written on the roof of a coach on my way to France " (WORDSWORTH).

BURNS'S DAISY.¹

"THERE!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
"Is Mossgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns plowed up the Daisy." Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried 5
Above sea clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air was vivified.
Beneath "the random *biel*^d of clod or stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower 10
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling plowshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

¹ See Burns's *To a Mountain Daisy*.

PERSONAL TALK.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbors daily, weekly, in my sight :
And, for my chance acquaintance, ladies bright, 5
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire ; 10
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

" Yet life," you say, " is life ; we have seen and see, 15
And with a living pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe." 20
Even be it so ; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me !
Children are blessed, and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced : partly at their feet,
And part far from them : sweetest melodies 25

Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
 Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
 He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
 We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood, 30
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood, 35
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
 There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
 Matter wherein right voluble I am,
 To which I listen with a ready ear;
 Two shall be named, preëminently dear,— 40
 The gentle Lady¹ married to the Moor;
 And heavenly Una² with her milk-white Lamb.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
 From evil speaking; rancor, never sought, 45
 Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
 And thus from day to day my little boat
 Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably. 50
 Blessings be with them,—and eternal praise,
 Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
 The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs, 55
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

¹ Wordsworth regarded Othello as one of the most pathetic of human compositions.

² Chief heroine of Spenser's *Faërie Queene*.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:¹
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea: 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

¹ "This verse has always seemed to me admirable at once for exactness and for majesty. There is something very special in the delicacy of the characterization joined to the sublimity of the image" (EDMOND SCHERER).

“THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.”

THE world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; 5
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,
To think that now our life is only dressed
For show; mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! — We must run glittering like a brook 5
In the open sunshine, or we are unblessed:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore: 10
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION¹ UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG,

NOVEMBER, 1835.

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.²

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border Minstrel led.³

5

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,⁴
'Mid moldering ruins low he lies ;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow
Has closed the Shepherd Poet's eyes :⁵

10

¹ "These verses were written extempore, immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death in a Newcastle paper, to the editor of which I sent a copy for publication. The persons lamented in these verses were all either of my friends or acquaintances" (WORDSWORTH).

² See Yarrow Visited, page 83.

³ See Yarrow Revisited, page 87.

⁴ Walter Scott died September 21, 1832.

⁵ James Hogg died November 21, 1835.

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
 From sign to sign, its steadfast course,
 Since every mortal power of Coleridge 15
 Was frozen at its marvelous source;¹

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
 The heaven-eyed creature² sleeps in earth;
 And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
 Has vanished from his lonely hearth.³ 20

Like clouds that rake the mountain summits,
 Or waves that own no curbing hand,
 How fast has brother followed brother
 From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber 25
 Were earlier raised, remain to hear
 A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
 "Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
 Like London with its own black wreath, 30
 On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth looking
 I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,⁴
 Thou too art gone before; but why,
 O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered, 35
 Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

¹ S. T. Coleridge died July 25, 1834.

² "His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them like a sea with darkened luster" (WILLIAM HAZLITT).

³ Charles Lamb died December 27, 1834.

⁴ George Crabbe died February 3, 1832.

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.¹

40

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or lovelorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

¹ Felicia Hemans died May 16, 1835.

GENERAL NOTE.—In connection with the elegiac poems in this book, lovers of Wordsworth's poetry will read with pleasure the Memorial Verses in which Matthew Arnold laments the death of Goethe, Byron, and Wordsworth. We quote a few lines:

“ Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He, too, upon a wintry clime
Had fallen—on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.”

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH.

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold :
As vapors breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mold
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain ;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight! —away,
Dark thoughts! —they came, but not to stay ;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,

Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow, 25
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plow,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave. 30

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone,
Whose light I hailed when first it shone
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne 35
On humble truth.¹

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,— 40
Neighbors we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibers are entwined, 45
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

¹ Here we have more than a hint of the fact that Wordsworth took Burns as a model in selecting homely themes for poetical treatment.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
 Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"¹ 50
 At this dread moment—even so—

 Might we together
 Have sat and talked where gowans blow,
 Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed 55
 Within my reach; of knowledge graced
 By fancy what a rich repast!

 But why go on?—
 Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
 His grave grass-grown. 60

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride
 (Not three weeks past the Stripling died),
 Lies gathered to his Father's side,
 Soul-moving sight!
 Yet one to which is not denied 65
 Some sad delight.

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
 Hath early found among the dead,
 Harbored where none can be misled,
 Wronged, or distressed; 70
 And surely here it may be said
 That such are blessed.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
 Checked oft-times in a devious race,
 May He who halloweth the place 75
 Where Man is laid,
 Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
 For which it prayed!

¹ See Burns's A Bard's Epitaph.

Sighing I turned away ; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear, 80
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

GENERAL NOTE.—Innumerable poetical tributes have been paid to the memory of Scotland's best poet. One of the best of these is that by Fitz-Greene Halleck. The last three stanzas are as follow :

“ All ask the cottage of his birth,
Gaze on the scenes he loved and sung,
And gather feelings not of earth
His fields and streams among.

“ They linger by the Doon's low trees,
And pastoral Nith, and wooded Ayr,
And round thy sepulchers, Dumfries!
The poet's-tomb is there.

“ But what to them the sculptor's art,
His funeral columns, wreaths, and urns?
Wear they not graven on the heart
The name of Robert Burns? ”

A POET'S EPITAPH.¹

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh:
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practiced eye,
The hardness of that sallow face. 5

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see? 10
Approach; yet, Doctor,² not too near:
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside, 15
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

¹ This, of course, is Wordsworth's characterization of himself. Compare it with A Bard's Epitaph, by Robert Burns. Most readers will agree with Lamb, who says this poem "is disfigured by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers."

² A divine.

Physician art thou?—one all eyes,
Philosopher! —a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

20

Wrapped closely in thy sensual fleece,
Oh, turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul away!¹

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod;
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

25

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

30

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

35

But who is he, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

40

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noontday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

¹ Line 24 originally read: "Thy pin point of a soul away!"

The outward shows of sky and earth,
 Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
 And impulses of deeper birth
 Have come to him in solitude. 45

In common things that round us lie
 Some random truths he can impart,— 50
 The harvest of a quiet eye,¹
 That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
 Hath been an idler in the land,
 Contented if he might enjoy 55
 The things which others understand.

—Come hither² in thy hour of strength;
 Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
 Here stretch thy body at full length;
 Or build thy house upon this grave. 60

1 “. . . to bend
 Once more upon the mountains high
 The quiet of a loving eye.”

BYRON, *Prisoner of Chillon*.

² Addressed to the imaginary “kindred spirit” in “homely russet brown”
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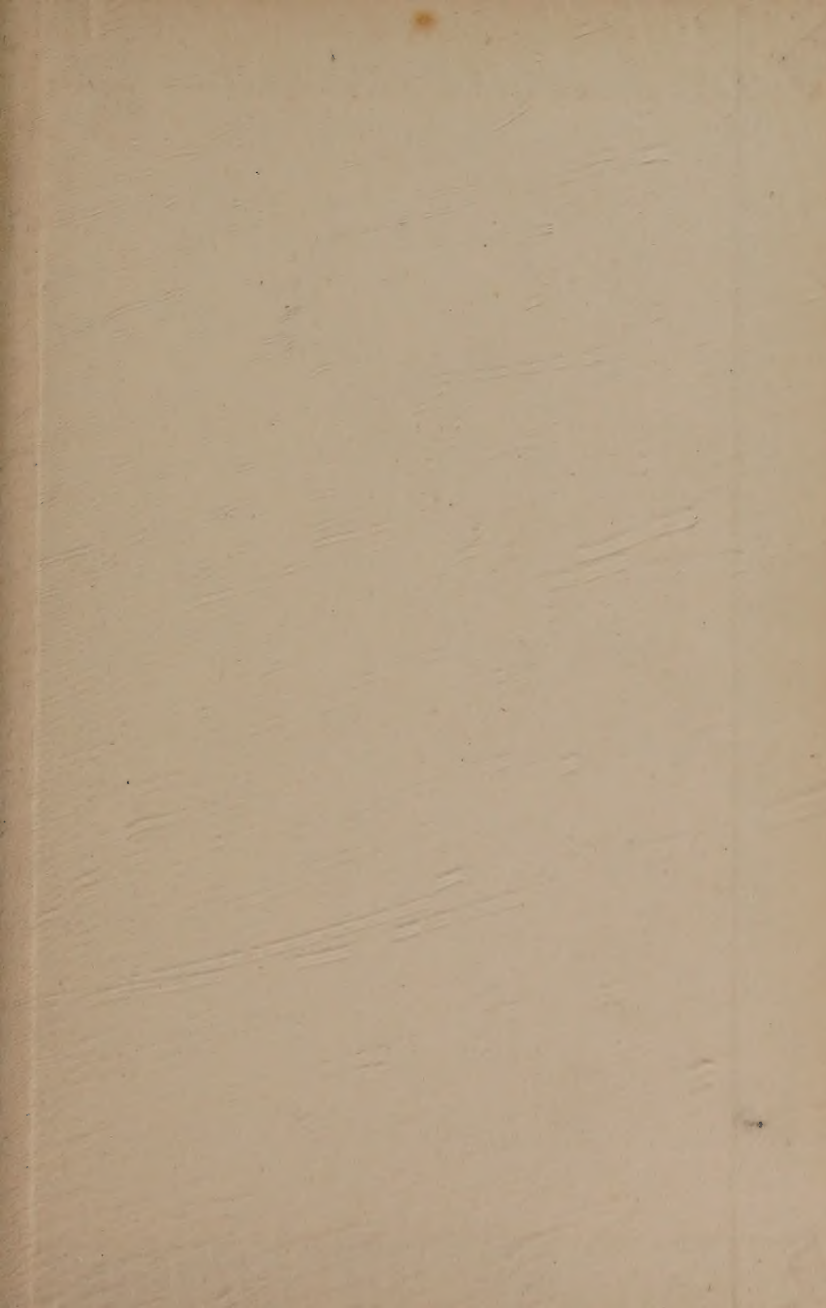
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